

Ministry of the Environment programs and initiatives

The Waste Diversion Organization – A partnership between industry, municipalities and the province

On November 3, 1999, Environment Minister Tony Clement announced a partnership between the province, municipalities and industry to establish a Waste Diversion Organization. The organization will help fund municipal Blue Box and other waste diversion programs.

An agreement has been reached by industry, municipal and provincial partners to form a voluntary, one-year Waste Diversion Organization (WDO). The WDO – established with a commitment of \$14.5 million from its members – brings together private sector and government partners to develop, fund and implement municipal waste diversion activities.

A key objective of the organization is to deliver a sustainable funding plan for the Blue Box program and other waste diversion initiatives

The Waste Diversion Organization's Mandate

Under the agreement, the Waste Diversion Organization will:

- fund Blue Box glass costs – the WDO will provide a total of \$8 million to help municipalities cover the costs of recycling wine and liquor glass containers in 1999 and 2000 (this continues the \$4 million given to municipalities in March 1999 by the Liquor Control Board of Ontario);
- earmark \$2 million toward the diversion of organic wastes – the majority of funding will assist municipalities with the establishment of organic waste diversion systems, including facilities;
- earmark \$1 million to establish an additional five to 10 depots for municipal special household wastes (sometimes referred to as household hazardous wastes);

- create a Blue Box efficiency program – as much as \$2 million will be provided to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Blue Box programs; and
- implement a program to provide municipalities with \$1 million worth of free advertising space in daily newspapers to inform the public about waste management activities.

The Waste Diversion Organization's review of long-term issues will include the development of options for a sustainable funding formula to cover up to 50 per cent of net operating costs for municipal Blue Box programs, as well as to continue the programs described above.

The agreement also calls for the organization to design a special household waste management program, including options for its funding.

Membership

The members of the Waste Diversion Organization are drawn from:

- the food and consumer product sectors, with four members, including the Chair (this sector will contribute as much as \$4 million to the WDO through its association, Corporations Supporting Recycling);
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, with four members;
- the Canadian Newspaper Association, with one member (CNA is providing the \$1 million advertising program);



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- the Canadian Paint and Coatings Association and the Canadian Manufacturers of Chemical Specialties Association, with one joint member (the two groups are providing a total of \$500,000);
- the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, with one member (the LCBO is contributing \$9 million);
- the Recycling Council of Ontario (RCO), with one member; and
- the Ministry of the Environment, with one non-voting member.

The ministry, which is represented by its deputy minister, has an advisory role in the organization. The other 12 members have one vote in WDO decisions, with the exception of the Chair, who has two votes.

The 3Rs in Ontario

The 3Rs – reduce, reuse and recycle – are alive and well in Ontario.

Ontario's goal is to reduce the amount of waste sent for disposal by 50 per cent, compared with 1987. By 1997, Ontarians had reduced their wastes by 35 per cent.

Here is a partial-list of 3Rs accomplishments that have been made in Ontario between 1994 and 1998:

- municipalities increased their waste diversion by 45 per cent – from 860,000 tonnes to more than 1.25 million tonnes;
- the backyard and central composting of organic materials has increased by 57 per cent – from 300,000 tonnes to 470,000 tonnes (central composting led the way, growing by 95 per cent); and
- materials collected through Blue Box programs, which account for a little more than 50 per cent of municipal waste diverted from disposal, have increased by 43 per cent – from 450,000 tonnes to 650,000 tonnes.

While Blue Box programs and other 3Rs activities are producing significant results, several challenges remain, including:

- ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of Blue Box programs and other waste diversion initiatives;
- increasing the diversion of organic materials that are not being composted through backyard and centralized composting; and
- improving upon the 6,000 tonnes of household hazardous wastes that are being diverted by existing municipal depot programs.

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